United Nations ECE/CES/2014/19

Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
20 February 2014

English only

Economic Commission for Europe

Conference of European Statisticians

Sixty-second plenary session
Paris, 9-11 April 2014
Item 9 of the provisional agenda
Selection of topics for seminars to take place during the 2015 CES plenary session

Guidelines for organising seminars of the Conference of European Statisticians

Note by the Secretariat

Summary

The note presents the updated guidelines for organising Conference of European Statisticians' seminars and templates for seminar papers and seminar outlines. The Conference of European Statisticians' Bureau discussed and approved these updated guidelines and templates in January 2014.

The note is presented to the Conference of European Statisticians for information.

GE.14-20915

1420915

Please recycle

I. Background

1. The 50th plenary session of the Conference of European Statisticians (CES) in 2002 decided that the CES plenary sessions will be organised in three modules: a formal session and two seminars. One of the seminars focuses on foundational issues of statistical systems and the other on new emerging issues. The topics for the seminars are selected by the Conference at its annual plenary session, based on consultation with countries and a proposal by the CES Bureau.

2. The CES seminars aim at providing a forum for international collaboration for official statisticians and stakeholders. The seminars discuss topical, strategic issues of official statistics that are of particular interest to the Heads of statistical offices. One of the most important parts of the seminar is the general discussion, allowing countries and organisations to present their experiences and to brainstorm on possible ways to address common problems. Countries and international organisations are also invited to prepare papers on the seminar topics or participate in organising the seminars or sessions..

3. The purpose of these guidelines is to facilitate the work of the organisers of CES seminars. The guidelines provide instructions on the role of the various players in organising the CES seminars and important deadlines in preparing the seminars. Organisation of the CES seminars can be flexible, as different topics may require different approaches. Annex 1 of the guidelines provides a recommended template that can be used in drafting CES seminar papers.

4. The CES Bureau guides the seminar preparations. The Bureau reviews a first draft outline for the organisation of the seminars at its meeting in autumn and a final version of the outline at its meeting in spring before the CES plenary session. Annex 2 suggests a recommended template for seminar outlines that are prepared by the seminar organisers.

II. Purpose of the seminars of the Conference of European Statisticians

5. The purpose of the CES seminars is to:

(a) Provide an opportunity to discuss new conceptual work in depth and to explore leading-edge emerging topics;

(b) Provide an equal opportunity for all member countries and international organisations to contribute;

(c) Encourage interaction with policy makers, stakeholders and users of statistics;

(d) Serve as a basis for launching follow-up work on topical statistical issues;

(e) Promote cooperation in addressing problems together (e.g. by establishing joint Task Forces).

III. Roles for the persons involved in organising seminars of the Conference of European Statisticians

A. Seminar Chair/Organiser

6. The Seminar Chair/Organiser is Head of a statistical office or his/her representative. The tasks include the following:

(a) Responsible for the overall preparation of the seminar;

(b) Decides on the number and the structure of sessions,

(c) Identifies and invites Session Organisers in collaboration with the Secretariat;

(d) Works closely with the Session Organisers, e.g. in inviting authors to prepare papers;

(e) Prepares the outline of the seminar for two Bureau meetings before the CES plenary session;

(f) Makes suggestions for and may invite a keynote speaker;

(g) Chairs the seminar at the CES plenary session, including the individual sessions;

(h) Chairs the general discussion from the floor;

(i) Ensures that the time schedule is respected;

(j) At the end of the seminar, offers clear conclusions and recommendations to the Conference for follow-up work.

B. Session Organiser

7. The Session Organiser is Head of a statistical office or his/her representative. The Session Organiser prepares the session in collaboration with the Seminar Chair. The Session Organiser is responsible for managing the discussions and focusing the session on issues of interest to the Heads of statistical offices. The tasks include the following:

(a) Responsible for the content of the session;

(b) Acts as a discussant aiming at animating the discussion and capturing the critical, substantive issues for discussion;

(c) Gives instructions to authors of papers and reviews papers in advance providing feedback to authors to ensure that the papers focus on the seminar topics.

(d) Selects papers for translation with the Seminar Chair (maximum 3 per session);

(e) Introduces the topic at the beginning of the session;

(f) Gives a presentation discussing the key points from the papers focusing on the main issues instead of covering papers one by one;

(g) Raises questions targeted to all authors and prepares questions for general discussion;

(h) At the end of the session, offers a short summary of the discussion and recommendations for follow-up work.

8. The Session Organiser should prepare the questions for authors and general discussion in advance of the CES plenary session, and share them with the Seminar Chair, the Secretariat and the authors 3 weeks before the CES seminar at the latest.

9. The presentation of the Session Organiser should:

(a) Use PowerPoint slides (maximum of 10 slides using contrasting colours);

(b) Take no more than 20 minutes;

(c) Be sent to the Secretariat 1 week before the CES seminar at the latest.

IV. Papers for the seminars of the Conference of European Statisticians

10. The purpose of the papers is to promote discussion of emerging issues, share good practices and point out gaps and issues that require international work. Annex 1 provides a recommended template for papers.

11. Countries and international organisations planning to contribute papers to the CES seminars should inform the ECE secretariat.

12. The Seminar Chair or a Session Organiser could prepare an issue paper to help focus the seminar. A draft issue paper could be written in the early stages of the seminar preparation to guide the Session Organisers and authors of papers to focus on the strategic topics of the seminar and the sessions. Another option would be to write an issue paper to reflect the papers provided by countries and international organisations by drawing out main points to guide the discussion at the seminar.

13. In advance of the CES plenary session, the seminar organisers will select a maximum of 3 papers per session for translation into the three United Nations official languages – English, French and Russian, and inform the authors about the deadlines. The papers to be translated need to be submitted to the Seminar Chair, Session Organiser and the Secretariat 12 weeks in advance of the CES seminar.

14. Papers that will not be translated should be submitted in English 7-8 weeks in advance of the CES seminar. Papers submitted within this deadline will be included into official United Nations document system that maintains them for public use. Furthermore, the seminar and session organisers will need enough time to analyse the papers to present the key issues at the seminar.

15. In general the papers should:

(a) Aim at raising issues and stimulating discussion;

(b) Avoid technical details;

(c) Stay concise: the papers should not be more than 6 pages long, including graphs and diagrams. Papers may exceed 6 pages if seen necessary by the Session Organiser.

16. At the CES seminar, the authors of papers may be invited by the Session Organiser to reply to specific questions. The replies of authors should be concise (1-2 minutes maximum) to allow more time for general discussion on the strategic issues raised in the papers.

V. Structure of the seminars of the Conference of European Statisticians

17. Each seminar lasts about one day (some time may need to be allocated to official business, such as to opening of the CES plenary session, reports from the governing bodies of CES and sometimes for discussing some topical issue of the CES work).

18. The seminars preferably contain 2-3 sessions. The seminars should conclude with concrete proposals for a way forward.

19. The timetable of the seminar should be planned in detail. The following sample timetable is indicative only. If the seminar is on the first day of the Conference, the seminar begins at 10:00 to allow for opening of the plenary session. If the seminar is on the second day of the Conference, the seminar may end at 16:00 to allow for discussing topical issues of the CES work. A 2-hour lunch breaks need to be reserved for the interpreters, and 20-30 minutes coffee/tea breaks around 11:00 and 16:00.

A sample timetable for the CES seminars

CES seminar
Introduction by Seminar Chair (5 min)
Keynote speech (15-20 min)
Session I
Introduction by Session Organiser (5 min)
Key issues identified in the papers (15 min)
Comments by authors of papers
Coffee/tea break
General discussion (40-55 min)
Short summary of the session (3-5 min)
Lunch break
Session II
Introduction by Session Organiser (5 min)
Key issues identified in the papers (15 min)
Comments by authors of papers
Coffee/tea break
General discussion (40-55 min)
Short summary of the session (3-5 min)
Session III
Conclusions and recommendations for follow-up work (10 min + discussion)

20. The seminar may begin with a keynote speech delivered by a prominent person, e.g. representative of stakeholders, policy makers, users of statistics and academia. The seminars should be outward looking and invite stakeholders to engage in dialogue with the statistical community and present their expectations towards official statistics.

21. The Seminar Chair and Session Organisers can suggest their preferred approach for discussing the chosen seminar topic. It may sometimes be helpful to organise the concluding session in the form of a round table with Heads of statistical offices and other Chief statisticians capturing the strategic issues for further work. A panel discussion involving stakeholders could also be a useful approach for some sessions.

22. The seminar organisers may explore how to make use of the possibilities offered by modern technology to make the seminar more interactive, such as web-streaming, recording the discussion in video, tweeting, etc. The related costs and the simultaneous interpretation into French and Russian have to be taken into account. Any technological equipment should be well tested and a backup system should be envisaged in advance.

VI. Important deadlines

	DEADLINE
First outline of the seminar submitted to the Secretariat (for a review by the Bureau)	4 weeks before the autumn Bureau meeting
Revised outline (after comments from the Bureau)	4 weeks before the spring Bureau meeting
Submission of papers to be translated to the Secretariat	12 weeks before the CES plenary session
Submission of other papers to the Secretariat	7-8 weeks before the CES plenary session
Session Organisers send the questions they plan to raise at the seminar to the authors of papers, copy to the Secretariat	3 weeks before the CES plenary session
Session Organisers send the PowerPoint presentations to the Secretariat	1 week before the CES plenary session

Annex 1. Template for papers for the seminars of the Conference of European Statisticians

Suggested structure

1. The purpose of this suggested structure for papers is to help authors to focus their papers, and as such help Heads of statistical offices in reading the papers for seminars. The paper should be in total 6 pages long, and it should be targeted at the Heads of statistical offices. Please see below the suggested structure for the papers. It is advisable to use additional subheadings under the below headings for discussing different issues.

[Title of the paper]

Note by [name of the organisation or country]

Summary

2. This paper… [Please explain here in a summary form the focus of the paper and the motivation for addressing the topic (in maximum 70-125 words).]

3. This paper is presented to the Conference of European Statisticians seminar on… [name of the seminar] …for discussion.

I. Introduction

4. [Please introduce briefly the scope/coverage/focus of the seminar paper. This section may also touch upon the background of the topic. The introduction may also discuss the main motivation for discussing the selected topic at the CES seminar. Why is it an important topic from the viewpoint for the CES or statistical offices in general?]

II. [Description of current work or overview of the topic]

5 .[This section describes the topic in substance. It could describe the current work and latest developments related to the seminar topic.]

III. [Issues and challenges]

6. [This section highlights the main issues, challenges and findings related to the seminar topic. This is often the most informative part of the paper. Main issues and problems in the area should be described taking into consideration the interest of other international statistical offices or international organisations. The issues should be considered from a strategic and future-oriented viewpoint. The paper may make a distinction between conceptual issues, measurement issues, managerial issues, etc.]

IV. Conclusions and recommendations

7. [The paper could finish with concrete recommendations and proposals for discussion at the CES seminar. This section may also highlight plans or suggestions for future work nationally or internationally. It can also draw attention to existing statistical gaps to be dealt with.]

Annex 2. Template for outlines for seminar of the Conference of European Statisticians (prepared by the Seminar Chair and Session Organisers for review by the Bureau)

I. Background

1. At ...plenary session, the Conference of European Statisticians (CES) selected the topic ... for one of the CES seminars to be held in... The organisation of the seminar will be coordinated by .... In addition ... and ... offered to organise the sessions. The seminar will be chaired by... [person]

2. [Description of the overall topic and focus of the seminar]

3. The following countries and organisations offered to contribute papers to the seminar at the CES plenary session:... Additional papers will be prepared by... The abstracts of the papers are provided in Annex 1 to this outline.

II. Structure of the seminar

4. The seminar will open with... Suggestions for the keynote speakers and topics include: [provide a list]

5. The seminar will consist of two/three sessions: the first one focusing on ..., and the second one on ... [this text may be used in the public CES provisional agenda]

6. The seminar will be organised in the form of...

7. The following technical equipment would be needed..., and could be provided by...

A. Session 1

Session Organiser:

8. The session will discuss... The discussion will focus on the following aspects: [provide a list] [this text may be used in the public CES provisional agenda]

(a)

(b)

Contributions offered (abstracts of papers are provided in the Annex):

9. Papers to be translated:

- [Country/organisation]: name of the paper
-

10. Papers (not for translation):

- [Country/organisation]: name of the paper
-

B. Session 2

Session Organiser:

11. The session will discuss... The discussion will focus on the following aspects: [provide a list] [this text may be used in the public CES provisional agenda]

(a)

(b)

Contributions offered (abstracts of papers are provided in the Annex):

12. Papers to be translated:

- [Country/organisation]: name of the paper
-

13. Papers (not for translation):

- [Country/organisation]: name of the paper

C. Session 3

14. The concluding session will...

III. Detailed timetable for the seminar

14. [Please provide the detailed timetable e.g. using the sample timetable provided in the *Guidelines for organising CES seminars.*]

Annex to the outline: Abstracts of seminar papers